

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ**

**MINUTES OF MARCH MONTHLY MEETING  
OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, CHARLEVILLE ROAD, TULLAMORE  
ON MONDAY, 21ST MARCH 2016 AT 2.00 P.M.**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Cllr. E. Dooley, Cathaoirleach (Presiding), Cllrs. N. Bourke, J. Carroll, J. Clendennen, N. Cribbin, D. Dolan, S. Dooley, E. Fitzpatrick, J. Foley, D. Harvey, B. Killeavy, J. Leahy, T. McKeigue, M. O'Reilly, P. Ormond, D. Owens and L. Quinn and Cllr S. Maher
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Cllr. F. Moran
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F; Mr. F. Heslin, D.O.S; Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S; Mr. D. Kirrane D.O.S; Mr. G. Bruton, A/Meetings Administrator; Mr. Paul Veale, Midlands Regional Manager IDA; Ms. Brid Summers, IDA, Mr. C. McCarthy, Senior Engineer; Ms. O. Martin, Head of LEO; Mr. J. Hogan, A.O., Ms. P. Hughes, A.O.; Ms. F. Flaherty C.O.
<b>SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS:</b>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. M. O'Reilly, the members agreed to suspend standing orders to allow the members discuss in-committee an issue that had arisen.</p> <p>The March Monthly meeting resumed at 2.20p.m.</p>
<b>VOTES OF SYMPATHY:</b>	<p>Votes of sympathy were unanimously extended to the following:-</p> <p>Cllr. J. Foley, on the death of his mother-in-law, Mrs Anna Sweeney;</p> <p>The Family of Ms. Anne Coughlan, former County Librarian;</p> <p>Ms Olwen Cummins, Offaly County Council, on the death of her grandmother, Mrs Mary Ann (Molly) Gleeson;</p> <p>Mrs. Frances Cunningham, 1 Ardra View, Bracknagh on the death of her husband, Thomas;</p> <p>Mr. Sean Kenny, Shandra, Portarlinton on the death of his brother, Noel;</p> <p>Mr. &amp; Mrs. PJ McLoughlin, Arden View, Tullamore on the death their son, Mark;</p> <p>Mr. Joe Neville, Lynally, Mucklagh, Tullamore on the death of his brother, Gabriel;</p>

<b>VOTES OF SYMPATHY: (contd)</b>	<p>Mr. Alan Davy, Tubberdaly, Rhode on the death of his nephew, Patsy;</p> <p>The Chief Executive, on her own behalf and on behalf of the staff of the Council joined with the members in these votes of sympathy.</p>
<b>CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:</b>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll, the members resolved to adopt the minutes of the February Monthly Meeting held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016.</p>
<b>MINUTES FOR NOTING:</b>	<p>The minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held in Áras an Chontae, Tullamore on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 were noted.</p>
<b>FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY</b>	<p>Mr. E. Dooley, Cathaoirleach advised that following the election of Ms. Carol Nolan, TD to Dail Eireann, a casual vacancy had now arisen for membership of Offaly County Council. He advised that the vacancy would be filled in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and the relevant legislation.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. B. Killeavy, seconded by Cllr. M. O'Reilly, it was agreed to co-opt Mr. Sean Maher onto the council. The members welcomed Mr. S. Maher to the Council and wished him well.</p> <p>All members joined in offering their congratulations to Ms. Carol Nolan, Mr. Barry Cowen and Ms. Marcella Corcoran Kennedy on their election to Dail Eireann.</p>
<b>ELECTION/APPOINTMENT /NOMINATION TO:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>TRANSPORTATION &amp; EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC</b></li> <li>• <b>ENVIRONMENT, WATER &amp; DRAINAGE SERVICES SPC</b></li> <li>• <b>JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE</b></li> <li>• <b>LAOIS/OFFALY EDUCATION TRAINING BOARD</b></li> <li>• <b>OFFALY FILM COMMISSION</b></li> </ul>	<p>Mr. E. Dooley, Cathaoirleach advised that following the election of Ms. Carol Nolan, TD to Dail Eireann, a vacancy had now arisen for membership of the following Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation &amp; Emergency Services SPC</li> <li>• Environment, Water &amp; Drainage Services SPC</li> <li>• Joint Policing Committee</li> <li>• Laois/Offaly Education Training Board</li> <li>• Offaly Film Commission</li> </ul> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. B. Killeavy, seconded by Cllr. M. O'Reilly, the members resolved to appoint Cllr. S. Maher to each of the above committees.</p>
<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT:</b>	<p>Mr. Peter Scully, Chairperson of the Audit Committee, gave a brief overview of the <i>Audit Committee Annual Report 2015</i> that was circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Mr. P. Scully noted the number of meetings held, the role of the Audit Committee and outlined the Committee's objectives for 2015. He outlined the Committee's Work Plan for 2016 and noted that the Meeting and Presentation to the Council,</p>

<p><b>AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT:</b> (Cont'd)</p>	<p>scheduled for April 2016 was taking place in March 2016.</p> <p>In concluding his report Mr. P. Scully thanked committee members, council staff and elected members for their continued support.</p> <p>The members acknowledged the work of the Audit Committee and thanked Mr. P. Scully for his comprehensive report.</p> <p>The member resolved to adopt the Audit Committee's Charter and the Internal Audit Charter on the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan and seconded by Cllr J. Carroll.</p>
<p><b>TAKING IN CHARGE OF PRIVATE HOUSING ESTATE AT CLUAIN NA SPIDEOGA, CLOGHAN, CO. OFFALY:</b></p>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. J. Clendennen, the members agreed to the taking in charge of private housing estate at Cluain na Spideoga, Cloghan in accordance with the terms of the notice date 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016, as previously circulated.</p>
<p><b>ROADS WORKS SCHEME 2016:</b></p>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. S. Dooley, the members resolved to adopt the Road Works Scheme 2016 as previously circulated.</p>
<p><b>AMENDMENT TO SPEED LIMIT BYE LAWS TO INCLUDE A SPECIAL SPEED LIMIT OF 30 KM/H IN HOUSING ESTATES:</b></p>	<p>Mr. F. Heslin, D.O.S. drew the members attention to document circulated with the agenda. He advised that following legal advice, the draft bye laws were put on display in November 2015. No submissions were received on the draft amendment to the byelaws and the council proceeded to prepare amendments to the current byelaws as presented. The proposed amendments were discussed and considered by the Transportation and Emergency Services SPC on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016. He advised that the anticipated date for implementation of the speed limits is 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016.</p> <p>In response to a question raised, Mr. F. Heslin advised that it would only apply to estates taken in charge by Offaly County Council.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the members resolved to adopt the amendment to the speed limit bye-laws to include a special speed limit of 30 km/h in housing estates, as previously circulated.</p>
<p><b>MR. PAUL VEALE, MIDLANDS REGIONAL MANAGER WITH THE IDA:</b></p>	<p>Mr. Paul Veale, Midlands Regional Manager of the IDA, made a presentation to the members on the IDA's Strategy for Job Creation in Ireland. He outlined the vision and mission for Ireland and advised on their targets up to 2019. He outlined the key elements of the Strategy and gave a current overview of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Ireland.</p> <p>He outlined what steps the IDA offices took to ensure Irelands continued attractiveness for FDI in the global markets. He outlined the key trends and observations being made by IDA offices abroad, noting that Ireland attracted 4% of the FDI in Europe despite having only 1% of the European population.</p>

**MR. PAUL VEALE  
MIDLANDS REGIONAL  
MANAGER WITH THE  
IDA:  
(Cont'd)**

Mr. P. Veale noted the Ireland was considered as a region in the international context, particularly in the North American market. He advised that the key factors in determining FDI success included:

- ❖ Critical mass of population and urban centres
- ❖ Ability to attract and develop appropriate skills (talent)
- ❖ Existence of clusters
- ❖ Regional infrastructure and place making, including social and cultural capital

He noted that the IDA had set investment targets for each region and were seeking a minimum increase in investments of 30% to 40% in each region, outside Dublin. He advised that the IDA were focusing on regional urban centres, which can act as key attractors of investment, were strengthening their regional footprint, and working with regional stakeholders through the Regional Action Plan process. He noted that IDA had adopted a collaborative approach and through Regional Action plans were working with local communities, LEO's, Councils, Chambers, Bord Failte, Industry, and Education Institutes.

Mr. Veale informed the meeting that the outlook for 2016 was positive, but he stressed that all investments are hard-won noting in particular the increased competition internationally for FDI and a trend for moving to cities. He advised that Ireland must retain its cost competitiveness, and noted that talent was the key and education and training systems needed to continue to be responsive and flexible. He noted that Offaly LEO had provided "Incubation Space" for entrepreneurs and were supporting local businesses through a number of initiatives and mentoring.

The members thanked Mr Veale for his presentation; they noted that it gave them a greater understanding of the challenges facing the county and the IDA. They noted that the economic recovery was driven by local SME's and queried if there were sufficient serviced lands and vacant units available in the county for potential investors. They noted that broadband did not appear to be a deciding factor for investors. The members queried if Offaly was considered for Data Storage Projects and if the I-LOFAR Project would be considered comparable with a university or IT. They queried if the results of the commuter survey could be shared with the County Council.

In response Mr. Veale advised that the IDA overseas offices would endeavor to take full advantage of Irish heritage in contacts with the principals of investor companies. He noted that broadband speeds could be an issue for some companies who had a culture of employees working from home. He noted that there was no direct correlation between site visits and job creation. He advised that I-LOFAR would assist with connectivity issues and provide the infrastructure to handle large data sets; he noted that Offaly had been considered for Data Storage Projects but cautioned that these projects required significant electricity supplies. In relation to the

<p><b>MR. PAUL VEALE MIDLANDS REGIONAL MANAGER WITH THE IDA: (Cont'd)</b></p>	<p>commuter survey, he advised that this survey was directed at companies not individual commuters, he noted that the IDA were working to develop a model to analysis census data which would be greater use to determine commuter patterns. In response to a query raised Mr. Veale advised that the IDA worked with established local companies to seek to expand their involvement beyond their initial mandate. He noted that the IDA strategy was designed to replace “low skill / high job numbers” industries with “high skill / low job numbers” industries with an increase in the number of companies involved.</p> <p>The Chief Executive thanked Mr. Veale for his presentation and the members for their contributions to the ensuing discussion. She noted that the County Council would have a role to play in the quality of life and place-making factors. She noted the value of any skills audits conducted. She noted that Offaly County Council was supporting SME’s and local entrepreneurs through the LEO offices and the provision of “Hot Desk” facilities.</p>
<p><b>LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE – END OF YEAR REPORT:</b></p>	<p>Ms. O. Martin, Head of LEO presented the Local Enterprise Office Annual Report. She noted that the Report gave an overview of the core initiatives undertaken by the LEO Offices.</p> <p>The members thanked Ms Martin for her presentation, and noted that the LEO office was an excellent resource for guidance and advice to local businesses and individuals setting up businesses. The members congratulated the staff of LEO and the recent Enterprise Week and the Student Enterprise Awards and noted that the future of enterprise in the County was vested in the young.</p> <p>Responding to comments from the members Ms Martin noted that staff in the LEO office would assist applicants in simplifying the paperwork involved in establishing a business venture and clarify the drawdown process at the application stage. LEO would also monitor the failure rates for new ventures.</p> <p>The Cathaoirleach noted that there are good connections between the IDA and the local LEO offices and suggested that the merger of the LEO office and the Economic Development functions of the Council had been very successful.</p>
<p><b>MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT:</b></p>	<p>Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive drew the members’ attention to the monthly management report as circulated.</p> <p>She thanked all the staff members, members of the Civil Defence, the members of the St. Colmcille Pipe Band, and all the performers who were involved in making the Offaly100 Ceremony of Commemoration and Centenary Concert such a successful evening. The members agreed and extended their congratulations to all involved.</p>

<p><b>MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT:</b> (Cont'd)</p>	<p>The Cathaoirleach congratulated and thanked all those on the 2016 Commemoration Committee for their work noting that it was a memorable occasion and a fitting event to mark the Centenary.</p> <p>The members welcomed the comprehensive Management Report. In responding to questions raised the Chief Executive advised that in relation to a query on the National Lead Strategy, no grants were available to make retrospective payments for works already carried out. In relation queries on funding for Greenways, she advised that the Council was continuing to seek funding, and regarding the Local Improvement Schemes, all funding for these schemes was spent. She advised that the Council would be making a submission to the Dept for funding under the Severe Weather Allocations in April 2016.</p>
<p><b>CORPORATE POLICY GROUP REPORT:</b></p>	<p>Cllr. E. Dooley, Cathaoirleach advised that the Corporate Policy Group met on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016 to consider the Monthly Council Agenda and to approve the list of conferences and training courses for circulation.</p>
<p><b>NOTICES OF MOTION:</b></p>	<p><i>Cllr. T. McKeigue</i></p> <p>"That Offaly County Council calls on the Returning Officers for all Elections to use the many community centres and halls as polling stations and allow schools to continue as normal. And also to review the appointment of both poll clerks and presiding officers so as not to have the same people acting election after election and becoming part of the institution</p> <p><i>Cllr. S. Dooley</i></p> <p>"I call on the incoming Minister for Social Protection to reverse the harsh cuts made to One Parent Family payments by the previous Administration."</p> <p><i>Cllr. S. Dooley</i></p> <p>"I call on the incoming Minister with responsibility for Housing to review the criteria with regard to eligibility to qualify for Local Authority Housing or Rent Assistance and to revise the Rent Allowances Allocations as a first step in dealing with our current housing crisis."</p> <p>It was agreed to defer the notices of motion until the April Monthly meeting.</p>
<p><b>COMHDHÁLACHA:</b></p>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. S. Dooley, the members noted and approved the conferences and training seminars as follows:</p> <p><b><u>CONFERENCES:</u></b></p> <p>Celtic Conferences "Local Economic &amp; Community Plans" 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016</p>

<p><b>COMHDHÁLACHA:</b> (Cont'd)</p>	<p>The Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork <i>It was agreed no member would attend.</i></p> <p>ACE Management &amp; Training Microsoft Excel Workshop for Councillors 30<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 The Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork <i>It was agreed no member would attend.</i></p> <p>Celtic Conferences “Auditing and Governance in Local Government” 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2016 The Four Seasons Hotel. Carlingford, Co. Louth <i>It was agreed no member would attend.</i></p> <p><b><u>TRAINING:</u></b></p> <p>LAMA Spring Training Seminar “Planning &amp; Flood Plains Insurance &amp; Finding Solutions” 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 Sligo Park Hotel, Pearse Road, Sligo <i>It was agreed Cllrs. F. Moran, D. Harvey, E. Fitzpatrick, N. Cribbin, P. Ormond, N. Bourke, J. Clendennen and S. Dooley would attend.</i></p> <p><i>Retrospective approval was approved for the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The attendance of Cllr. Liam Quinn at a Housing Conference 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at The Connacht Hotel, Galway.</i></li> <li>- <i>The attendance of Cllrs. F. Moran and D. Harvey at a Mental Health Conference 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at the Park Hotel, Dungarven, Co. Waterford.</i></li> <li>- <i>The attendance of Cllrs. F. Moran and D. Harvey at AILG Training Day, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at Bloomfield House, Mullingar.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>COMHFHREAGRAS:</b></p>	<p>The correspondences that issued with the Agenda were noted.</p>
<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS:</b></p>	<p><b>Irish Water</b> Cllr. J. Leahy enquired if the staff of Offaly County Council employed by Irish Water under the current service level agreement would transfer back to Offaly County Council if Irish Water was abolished and if the council assets that had transferred to Irish Water would revert back to Offaly County Council. Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S advised that the transferred staff would remain employees of Offaly County Council and that the transferred assets would also return to the Council.</p> <p><b>Illegal Dumping</b> Cllr. D. Harvey raised an issue in relation to illegal dumping at the old Cemex site on the Arden Road, Tullamore. Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S. advised that he would examine this issue, arrange a visit to the site and report back to Cllr. Harvey.</p>

<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS: (contd)</b>	<b>Roads</b> Cllr. M. O' Reilly queried Offaly County Council's policy for ramps on roads, specifically on approach roads near schools. It was agreed to discuss the issue in more detail at the next meeting of the Transportation and Emergency Services SPC.
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This concluded the business of the meeting.

**MINUTES CONFIRMED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**CATHAOIRLEACH** **RUNAÍ**

**18<sup>th</sup> April 2016**